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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The nine titles deal with the following topics: (1) the theory and application of presumption in public debate: (2) the rhetoric of transcendentalism: (3) speechwriting in rhetorical criticism: (4) the conspiracy argument as rhetorical genre: (5) the rhetoric of the tent evangelism movement: (6) understanding, communication, and cognitive homeostasis: (7) message strategy in compliance conflict: (8) the rhetorical vision of the Beatles from 1962 to 1970: and (9) the effects of feminist rhetoric on low income women of limited education. (FL)

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RHETORICAL AND COMMUNICATION THEORY:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in Dissertation Abstracts International, January through June 1981 (Vol. 41 Nos. 7 through 12)

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THE THEORY AND APPLICATION OF PRESUMPTION IN PUBLIC DEBATE

BARTANEN, MICHAEL DAVID, PH.D. *University of Southern California*, 1981. Chairman: Professor James McBath

This study examined the role of presumption in public debate. It evaluated traditional theories of presumption in argumentation, formulated a definition of presumption for use in analyzing public debate, and applied the definition to a specific controversy: the public debate over the safety of nuclear power.

Public debate is an important decision-making tool in American life. Defined as the process of creating, interpreting, and choosing between competing issues embodied in systemic and institutional agendas, public debate is the means by which citizens can consider important social issues outside of legislative and other decision-making channels. All forms of debate are shaped by explicit rules and informal conventions. One of the most important of these is the influence of presumptions.

Presumption was operationally defined as a dynamic, multi-faceted process of establishing and maintaining the likelihood of the audience acceptance of a claim. While presumption as "preconceived knowledge" appears in early Greek and Roman rhetorical theory, its place in Classical thought was confined primarily to the law. Richard Whately reintroduced presumption to general argumentation to provide the means necessary for allocating argumentative duties and assessing audience predispositions.

Confusion about Whately's theory, caused in part by the addition of new concepts rather than the revision of succeeding editions of the *Elements of Rhetoric* led to frequent attempts to interpret the role of presumption in argumentation. Three different perspectives on argumentation were developed. None of these perspectives treated presumption as a dynamic process and none of the perspectives was explicitly applied to public debate.

The unique nature of public debate, where broad issues rather than specific policy proposals are often considered, necessitates a broader view of the role of presumption. Presumption may have three specific functions: as a pre-arguing state of affairs where the audience has general assumptions for or against a particular policy change; prior to the controversy as an arguable issue, where arguers seek to claim that they hold presumption; and as a mediator of change, where presumptions affect the actions of arguers as well as the content of arguments.

The theory was applied to the public debate over the safety of nuclear power. Always a controversial subject, nuclear power engendered significant public debate during the 1970s as the nuclear power industry and the federal government sought to expand the usage of nuclear generating facilities for electricity production.

A strong initial presumption existed in favor of nuclear development, created by belief in the power of the atom and the ability of science to solve complex developmental questions. Both proponents and opponents sought to claim presumption for their positions through frequent examination of issues such as risk-assessment and the credibility of the scientific community. Finally, presumptions also mediated change, as proponents initially sought to accomplish "first-order change" through denial of the controversy; the restriction of information; and the denial of access to nuclear opponents to decision-making channels. The media treatment of the Three Mile Island accident may have served to catalyze "second-order change" as the incident seemed to create a general-public perception that nuclear power should be presumed dangerous until proven safe.

The study concludes that the view of presumption as a dynamic force in public debate is useful in understanding the complex nature of public debate.

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RHETORIC OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT AS INNOVATION

Order No. 8100125

CARA, ARTHUR JOSEPH, PH.D. *The Ohio State University*, 1980. 381pp. Adviser: Professor John J. Makay

The purpose of this study seeks to "recast" social scientific interpretations of the rhetoric of social movements, and introduce a new rhetorically coded lens from which to view the symbolic reality of the Transcendental Meditation social phenomenon. More specifically, the significance of this research is contingent upon how well it responds to the three following questions: (1) "Should rhetorical Scholars, as Smith and Windes suggest, recognize, at least in some cases, the rhetoric of innovational social movements, and thus allow innovational criticism to assume a useful place in the embryonic corpus of rhetorical movement literature?" (2) "If the rhetoric of innovational social movements is a legitimate consideration, then does a seemingly innovational social collectivity like the Transcendental Meditation movement, reflect the Smith-Windes critical criteria, and thus function to establish innovational criticism's new foothold in the rhetorical movement literature?" (3) "After having argued for the legitimacy of the rhetoric of innovational social movements, as well as allegedly having observed this type of mass persuasion within the context of the Transcendental Meditation movement, does a perceivable need exist to re-evaluate rhetorical definitions of social movements (like Cathcart's), in order to make room for fresh perspectives like innovational rhetorical movement criticism?"

The methodology for this study is derived from a dramaturgical approach to the rhetorical criticism of movements. Its dramaturgical perspective unfolds in the analyses set forth in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

Chapter Two argues that the establishment-conflict view of the rhetoric of social movements is ascendent in rhetorical movement criticism, and challenges its ascendancy by submitting as a viable alternative, the innovational perspective. It's challenge develops in a three-fold examination of: (1) Behavioristic Theory; (2) The Philosophic Foundations of Rhetoric; and (3) A Dramaturgical Perspective.

Chapter Three applies the Dramaturgical Perspective to the alleged innovational rhetoric of the Transcendental Meditation movement in the United States. It's three-fold application represents a broad response to the study's second research question. The answer to this question unfolds specifically as Innovational Configuration #4: Modern Symbols (fact)-Tradition (policy)-Objective (value).

Chapter Four seeks an answer to the study's last research question. Explored in a three-fold analysis which argues for a re-evaluation of rhetorical movement definitions, this discussion unfolds as (1) The Prohibitive Nature of Rhetorical Movement Definitions; (2) Recasting Rhetorical Movement Definitions; and (3) The Establishment-Conflict Configurations of a Rhetorical Movement Model.

The foregoing study provides a basis for several generalizations about the rhetorical study of social movements: (1) Some configurations or systems of rhetoric are more appropriate to the ontological, epistemological, and axiological demands of mass persuasion than are others. (2) Symbolists interpret events according to systems of being, knowing, and valuing. (3) The Smith-Windes theory of the rhetoric of social movements, however, provides critical recourse for those social movements which do not reflect establishment-conflict criteria. (4) Rhetorical movement criticism might prove more useful if it became less an instrument of historiography, and more a tool of rhetorical recodification. (5) Observing the influence that social psychology has had on the rhetorical study of social movements, rhetorical and communication theorists would do well to develop an interdisciplinary critical impulse so as to become more sensitive to the influence of other disciplines on their research.

SPEECHWRITING IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM: AN EXTENSION OF THEORY AS APPLIED TO THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

Order No. 8103632

CONDRAY, SUZANNE ELIZABETH, PH.D. *The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col*, 1980. 228pp. Supervisor: Professor Owen Peterson

Speechwriting practices have long been associated with rhetorical history. American presidents have employed the speechwriter's assistance since the beginning of this nation. From the dawn of radio, presidential speechwriting practices have grown to the extent that most presidents rely heavily on the writer to prepare the bulk of their messages.

While many political speakers have grown to depend on the speechwriter to assist him in preparing the ideas or language of his message, rhetorical critics have largely ignored the writer's influence on the message and his impact on the preparation process. The purpose of this study is fourfold. First of all, this critic examines the speechwriter's role in the preparation process and his contributions to presidential discourse since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Secondly, she attempts to point out the strengths and weaknesses of present rhetorical theory and criticism in considering speechwriting practices. Thirdly, the critic proposes her own theoretical postulates for extending critical methodologies, and finally, she applies her postulates to two speeches in Lyndon B. Johnson's administration.

The writer discusses how speechwriters have played various roles in preparing presidential discourse. Some participants are responsible for preparing only the language of the address, while others assist in policy decision-making which results in the speechwriter playing a significant role in preparing the ideas of the speech. The organization of writers vary, with some presidents relying primarily on individual efforts and others preferring committee writing efforts.

Regardless of their roles and organization, the speechwriter's presence proposes an interactional setting, in which the speaker and his writer or writers participate. The critic must examine the speechwriting effort as an interactional process and therefore consider the effect of the interaction between writers and the speaker on the drafting process and final product. This writer suggests guidelines whereby the critic may explore the triadic relationship between the speaker, the writers, and the ideas of the message; the triadic relationship between the speaker, the writers, and the language of the discourse; and the triadic relationship between the speaker, the writers, and the perception and response to a rhetorical situation.

The critic then examines the 1964 State of the Union speech and Johnson's March 31, 1968 speech, to determine the speechwriter's role in the drafting process and their effect on the final product. She describes the interaction between the participants in each drafting process and then examines each of the triadic relationships in both speeches. Finally, the critic evaluates the writer's contribution and interaction in each situation. She evaluates the writer's ability to assist the speaker in realizing his fullest potential inventionally, linguistically, and in response to the rhetorical situation; to assist in producing a superior text technically as well as artistically; and to assist in producing a desired response by making the speech a persuasive instrument.

THE CONSPIRACY ARGUMENT AS RHETORICAL GENRE

Order No. 8104701

CREPS, EARL GEORGE, III, PH.D. *Northwestern University*, 1980. 330pp.

Conspiracy allegations are omnipresent in American history. This dissertation is a study of the generic aspects of the conspiratorial argument. The inquiry operates from two basic premises: (1) conspiracy discourse is an identifiable rhetorical genre, and; (2) an analysis of this genre will provide insight into the ways in which discourse operates to resolve the rhetorical problem posed by evil. Chapter I opens with a brief outline of the study and presents a justification for such an approach to conspiracy. Moreover, the concept of rhetorical "genre" to be used in the study is defined, after Campbell and Jamieson, as being composed of substantive, stylistic, and situational forms bound together by an "internal dynamic."

Chapter II argues that the rhetorical problem posed by evil is the "dynamic" that motivates the sustains the genre, that is: each form making up the genus functions to resolve (or "make sense" out of) this problem by explaining the cause of evil (the Plot) and thereby shifting blame and guilt away from the community. Chapter III is a review of the primary and secondary literature on conspiracy. Secondary sources examined are from rhetorical, sociopolitical, and psychological research. This survey culminates in the formation of tentative hypotheses designed to "map" the basic features of the genus.

Chapter IV tests the hypothesis against a sample of discourse drawn from the Red Scare era (A. Mitchell Palmer's 1920 article, "The Case Against the 'Reds'"). Chapter V tests the hypotheses against an exemplar drawn from the conspiracy interpretations of the John F. Kennedy assassination (Mark Lane's 1966 bestseller, *Rush to Judgment*). The propositional and strategic forms of the exemplars are reconstructed in detail and the information obtained is used to assess the validity of the definitional hypotheses.

Chapter VI presents the study's conclusions. Although certain modifications were necessary, the generic "map" of conspiracy argument remained centered on three basic forms: a deductive/causal propositional substance, a dramatic/massively documented style, and a situation of perceived social stress. Finally, the study closes with suggestions for further research on the *ethos* of the conspiracy advocate and the question of sub-categories (e.g., extremist vs. mainstream) within the conspiracy genre.

THE TENT EVANGELISM MOVEMENT OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH: A DRAMATISTIC ANALYSIS

Order No. 8106885

DICKEY, DALE FRANKLIN, PH.D. *Bowling Green State University*, 1980. 163pp.

The Mennonite church in America experienced a tent mass evangelism movement during the decade of the fifties. This study investigated the rhetorical factors in an attempt to determine (1) whether a movement had occurred, of (2) a movement occurring, whether it succeeded or failed. A secondary purpose of the study was to ascertain the validity of the model as a construct for analysis of a church movement.

To examine the rhetorical strategies and critical periods in the encounter between the Mennonite church and the tent mass evangelism movement, this study utilized the dramatistic model of Kenneth Burke as developed by Leland Griffin and further explicated by Robert S. Cathcart.

Results indicated a movement occurred which threatened the church's doctrinal and traditional foundations. The model identified the critical periods in the movement's progressive confrontation with the established church. The paradigm provided an instrument to determine the crisis point as the church engaged the movement in dialectical enjoinment.

The conclusion reached suggested the tent evangelism movement in the Mennonite church failed because the revival leaders avoided the crisis moment by changing their approaches to mass evangelism which were acceptable to the church.

The research concluded that, although the model was designed as a paradigm for a socio-political movement success, the concepts were valid for the analysis of a church movement. Since the study focused on a church movement failure, an adjustment in the model structure was necessary and the explication noted.

UNDERSTANDING, COMMUNICATION, AND COGNITIVE HOMEOSTASIS

Order No. 8029752

EDWARDS, KYOKO HISAKA, PH.D. *University of Washington*, 1980. 136pp. Chairperson: Professor Richard F. Carter

The study inquired into: (1) understanding as an effect of communication, and (2) communication as an effect of cognitive homeostatsis. Randomly paired subjects communicated with each other through written messages about their orientations toward an issue. They were then asked separately to fill out two questionnaires: one about their own orientation and the other to estimate their partner's orientation. Then, the same steps were repeated; they exchanged written messages and the two questionnaires were filled out again.

Unweighted *kappa* was used as a measure of orientational similarity and orientational comprehension. It was hypothesized that those dyads that exchanged more orientation-related content items would be higher in subsequent orientational similarity than those pairs that exchanged less. Also, individual's orientational comprehension was expected to increase with orientation-related content items received. Both hypotheses were supported for one issue (where the subjects' orientations were diversified). Only the hypothesis on orientational comprehension was supported among subjects who discussed another issue, where more homogeneity and stability existed among the subjects' orientations.

The second line of inquiry was to assess the effect of cognitive homeostasis on subsequent communication acts: total communication acts, information-seeking acts, and information-giving acts.

Four homeostatic conditions were created: (1) perceiving the partner to be similar in orientation and wishing so (consonant condition); (2) perceiving the partner to be similar and wishing otherwise (conflict condition); (3) perceiving the partner to be dissimilar in orientation and wishing otherwise (dissonance condition); and, (4) perceiving the partner to be dissimilar and wishing so (consonant condition). It was hypothesized that those in nonhomeostatic conditions would initiate more communication acts than those who were in constant conditions; that those in the conflict condition would seek more information than those in non-conflict conditions; and, that those in the dissonance condition would give more information than those in non-dissonance conditions. However, these results were inconclusive.

Test-retest reliability showed that the orientation questionnaire was generally reliable. Some attenuation in reliability due to actual changes in orientation was observed, by a posttest measure given two weeks after the experiment compared with one given after one week.

A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF MESSAGE STRATEGY IN COMPLIANCE CONFLICT

Order No. 8100904

GILCHRIST, JAMES ALLEN, PH.D. *The University of Texas at Austin*, 1980. 173pp. Supervisor: Larry D. Browning

Compliance conflict occurs when one party (Target) violates the expectations of another (Seeker) such that the violation limits or impedes Seeker's ability to obtain goals. A compliance conversation is a communication episode in which Seeker initiates interaction to obtain Target's compliance through interpersonal persuasion. This research assumed that persuaders select messages from a repertoire of strategies built up from experience in similar contexts. These selections are guided by Seeker's knowledge of the social situation and his/her instrumental orientation. The social situation was conceptualized as being defined by a payoff matrix which contains the subjective utilities of alternative outcomes to each party. Persuaders select messages to affect the probabilities associated with alternative outcomes and/or to transform the subjective utilities assigned to alternative outcomes.

Concepts of strategy in game theory and bargaining research were extended to a model of message strategy. A grounded theory methodology was constructed from this model in order to accomplish three research objectives: (1) to discover the *elements* of Seeker's message strategy, literally a taxonomy of message types, (2) to discover how Seeker's message choices are contingent on Target's antecedent choices, and (3) to discover patterns of Seeker's message preferences. These objectives resulted in a substantive theory grounded in the context of the research.

Subjects were 57 employees of a state government agency, whose job is to contact owners of retail businesses when sales tax returns are not filed and/or tax has not been paid. Each subject participated in two tape-recorded collection calls with research confederates posing as uncooperative delinquent taxpayers. A highly specific taxonomy of 115 categories was used to code these data. Elements of strategy were discovered by deriving a reduced taxonomy (consisting of 15 Seeker and 16 Target elements) based on patterns in the data. Patterns of contingent message choice were discovered by analysis of an interact matrix which contained the frequency distribution of joint message choices in Target-Seeker interacts. Patterns of Seekers' message preferences were discovered by analysis of correlations between Seeker preferences for each type of message element and preferences for other message types.

A substantive theory was induced from the observed patterns. The theory is summarized by five propositions: (1) The message taxonomy reflects the demands of the specific context. (2) Informative, persuasive, and bargaining messages from focus on different issues in conflict: Informative messages focus on what has and is occurring; persuasive messages, on what ought to occur; and bargaining messages, on what will occur. (3) Seeker message choices are rationally connected to antecedent Target choices. (4) Seeker's responses to Target reflect Seeker's instrumental orientation towards finding a mutually acceptable solution. (5) Persuasive message types are distinguished by how the messages reflect and negotiate relational issues and the payoffs associated with alternative outcomes.

THE PEPPERLAND PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY IN THE RHETORICAL VISION OF THE BEATLES 1962-1970

Order No. 8100327

SEMMEL, KEITH DAVID, PH.D. *Bowling Green State University*, 1980. 225pp.

In recent years, the field of rhetorical criticism has begun widening its view of subjects which merit rhetorical investigation in terms of their suasory potential or persuasive effect. One such area of investigation is the persuasive power of rock music. This study examined the lyrical theme development and subsequent rhetorical vision of the Beatles during their seven years of commercial popularity in America and around the world.

Using the works of Susanne Langer, James Irvine, Walter Kirkpatrick, and Wilfrid Mellers as a basis, the study entailed a search for fantasy themes, fantasy types and the overarching rhetorical vision using the methodological construct proposed by Ernest Bormann in his 1972 article, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality."

Seven major themes were found to dominate the Beatles' music catalogue. These were categorized as Invitation to Love, Reaffirmation of Love, Love Gone Bad, Entrapment, Celebration of the Rock Culture, Social Commentary, and Fantasy Characterization/Narrative. These musical themes comprised three larger fantasy types: Romantic Fantasy, Social Fantasy, and Expressionistic Fantasy. These three fantasy types, in turn, made up the rhetorical vision known as the Pepperland Perspective, a uniquely optimistic vision in a reality of pessimism. It is this unique optimism of theme and vision which helps to account for the Beatles' success during the 1960s.

THE EFFECTS OF FEMINIST RHETORIC ON LOW INCOME WOMEN OF LIMITED EDUCATION

Order No. 8109701

WELLS, DENA, PH.D. *University of Oregon*, 1980. 248pp. Adviser: Charley A. Leistner

Low income American women of limited education have not supported the women's movement with their voices or votes to any great extent. Since prime goals of the movement are equal pay for equal work and increased job opportunity for all women, such lack of support is puzzling. Analysis of data on such women finds reasons for it, however.

A brief history of American working-class women and of the earlier women's movement shows the foundations of the current campaign for opportunities for women. Recurring patterns are traced in reports of interviews done with low income women of limited education. Media channels through which LI/LE women get their information on the women's movement are examined, as are two oral channels through which they receive information--direct contact with feminists and opinions which are passed down by older people.

Class differences in values and expectations are an obstacle to understanding among middle-class feminists and LI/LE women, who are usually working class. These differences are examined using sociological data. Lack of education is a crucial factor, in the eyes of those who lack it. Values and expected behavior regarding childrearing, relationships with men, and appropriate dress and behavior for women are not the same for middle-class and working-class women. The language which the feminist movement--especially the more radical wing--uses to express values is more apt to anger than persuade an LI/LE woman.

Analysis points to alternative rhetorical strategies which could appeal to this particular audience of potential supporters for the women's movement. Measures which could narrow the communication gap include: (1) increased research on the working-class woman herself, not as the silent partner of the working-class man: (2) an attempt to put more feminist ideas into the magazine and television programs which the LI/LE woman already sees: (3) direct, empathetic contact among feminists and LI/LE women working together on common projects: and (4) debate training for feminist speakers, with impartial raters.

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